

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1 and 26 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for facilitating interactive voting over the Internet during a corresponding live television broadcast event, comprising:
 - presenting a survey question and a plurality of responses to voters viewing the live television broadcast event;
 - directing the voters to cast votes over the Internet at a web site of a sponsor of the live television broadcast event;
 - receiving votes at a web site server in response to the survey question;
 - providing a Live Event Object residing on the server that maintains persistent connections between the Live Event Object and a database;
 - caching the votes received in a memory cache for a predefined time interval using the Live Event Object;
 - tabulating in memory on the server the cached votes accumulated over the predefined time interval to generate intermediate voting results;
 - writing the intermediate voting results and each raw vote accumulated over the predefined time interval to the database at the predefined interval;
 - computing in real time a final voting result to the survey question by continuously tallying each of the intermediate voting results written in the database; and
 - presenting the final voting results to viewers on the live television broadcast event prior to its conclusion.
2. (Original) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method recited in claim 1.
3. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the Live Event Object is resident in computer memory on the server.
4. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the Live Event Object establishes and maintains at least three persistent connections.

5. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein the persistent connections include a raw vote cast by each of the voters.

6. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein the persistent connections include current voting results obtained using the cached votes.

7. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein the interactive voting is in response to the survey question asked during a live event and the persistent connections include a definition of the live event.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising tabulating the intermediate voting results to compute final voting results.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising creating the survey question.

12. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 11, further comprising defining an event in which the survey question is asked and checking a validity of the survey question and the event definition to ensure accuracy.

13. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 11, further comprising determining whether there has been a new survey question created and, if so, then updating the database.

14. (Previously Presented) An interactive voting system using a computer network, comprising:

a server in communication with the computer network for receiving votes from a plurality of voters in response to a polling question presented to the voters during a live broadcast event that directs the plurality of voters to respond to the polling question by visiting a web site;

an object residing in memory on the server for caching votes received during a predefined time interval and summing the votes accumulated during that predefined time interval to compute an intermediate voting result, wherein the object is a non-relational object;

a database having a connection with the object that receives and writes the intermediate voting result and each raw vote received during the predefined time interval to the database at the predefined time interval, such that a plurality of intermediate voting results for different time intervals are generated;

tabulating a final voting result in real time by summing each of the plurality of intermediate voting results; and

presenting the final voting result during the live broadcast event.

15. (Previously Presented) The interactive voting system as set forth in claim 14, wherein the object is a Live Event Object containing at least some of the voting data as well as procedures and instructions for manipulating at least some of the voting data.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously Presented) The interactive voting system as set forth in claim 14, further comprising a persistent connection between the object and the database that is established and maintained by the object.

19. (Previously Presented) The interactive voting system as set forth in claim 18, wherein the persistent connection further comprises at least three persistent connections.

20. (Previously Presented) The interactive voting system as set forth in claim 14, further comprising an authoring system that enables a user to define an event and create polling questions associated with the event for distribution to the voters, wherein the authoring system is located at broadcast studios where the live broadcast event is occurring.

21. (Previously Presented) The interactive voting system as set forth in claim 20, wherein the authoring system further comprises a staging component that copies the event definition and polling questions to the database.

22. (Previously Presented) An interactive voting system that uses a computer network to process voting data in response to a survey question asked during a live television broadcast, comprising a Live Event Vote Server in communication with the computer network and accessible at a web site of a sponsor of the live television broadcast, a Live Event Object residing in memory on a Live Event Vote Server, the Live Event Object receiving and caching voting data over a predefined time interval from a client in communication with the computer network, the voting data representing responses to the survey questions given by viewers of the live television broadcast after having visited the sponsor's web site, tabulating the cached voting data accumulated over the predefined time interval to generate an intermediate voting result, and writing the intermediate voting results and each raw vote accumulated over the predefined time interval to a Live Event Database through persistent connections between the Live Event Object and the Live Event Database such that the intermediate voting result is used to compute a final voting result in real-time and the final voting result is presented to television viewers during the live television broadcast.

23. (Previously Presented) The interactive voting system as set forth in claim 22, further comprising a vote cache that receives and caches at least some of the voting data from the Live Event Object.

24. (Previously Presented) The interactive voting system as set forth in claim 23, further comprising a Live Event Vote Processor that tabulates the cached voting data from the vote cache to generate the intermediate voting results.

25. (Previously Presented) The interactive voting system as set forth in claim 24, wherein the Live Event Vote Processor tabulates the intermediate voting results to compute a final voting result in real time.

26. (Currently Amended) In a computer network having a plurality of clients and a server, a computer-implemented method for providing interactive voting over the Internet during a live television broadcast, comprising:

- presenting a survey question and a number of responses to voters viewing the live television broadcast;

- directing voters viewing the live television broadcast to vote for one or more of the responses by using the plurality of clients to visit a web site of a sponsor of the live television broadcast;

- transmitting votes submitted by the voters using the plurality of clients over the Internet to the server located at the sponsor's web site;

- providing an object resident in memory on the server that contains procedures and instructions for manipulating the votes;

- accumulating votes in the server memory in a cache during a predefined time interval, and tabulating in the server memory the accumulated cached votes at the end of the predefined time interval to generate an intermediate voting result;

- writing the intermediate voting result and each raw vote accumulated over the predefined time interval to a database at the end of the predefined time interval;

- establishing and maintaining a persistent connection between the object and the database to facilitate writing of the intermediate voting results;

- repeating the accumulation of votes and the writing of intermediate results to the database to obtain a plurality of intermediate results;

- tabulating the plurality of intermediate results to obtain a final voting result in real time; and

presenting the final voting results within time constraints of the live television broadcast.

27. (Original) The computer-implemented method as set forth in claim 26, wherein the persistent connection comprises at least three persistent connections.

28. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method as set forth in claim 26, further comprising caching the cached voting data in a vote cache.

29. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising writing each of the received votes to the database to allow cross-tabulation of demographic data.

30. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the predefined time interval is approximately fifteen seconds.

31. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:

tabulating in memory a plurality of the intermediate voting results written to the database such that the final voting results are updated; and
writing the updated final voting results to the database.

32. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 31, further comprising updating the final voting results approximately every ten seconds.